

WHANGAREI GIRLS' HIGH SCHOOL

POLICY STATEMENT

USE OF PHYSICAL RESTRAINT

Purpose:

To provide school staff with advice about safe ways to manage potentially dangerous situations when a student may need to be physically restrained so a safe physical and emotional environment is provided for students and staff.

Guidelines:

- The Act defines physical restraint as using physical force to prevent, restrict or subdue the movement of a student's body or part of the student's body.
- Seclusion is prohibited
- Physical restraint can only be used by teachers or authorised staff members.
- Procedure will be followed for authorising staff members who are not employed as teachers, to exercise restraint in accordance with the rules.
- The use of physical restraint is limited to situations where the teacher or staff member reasonably believes that the safety of the student or of any other person is at serious and imminent risk and the restraint used is reasonable and proportionate in the circumstances
- If there is an alternative to physically restraining a student, it must be used.
- School practices are well documented and available for all to see
- Teachers and authorised staff who are designated to physically restrain students are suitably supported and trained for this task
- A student who regularly presents with high-risk behaviour will have an individual behaviour plan which will outline the preventative and de-escalation strategies which could prevent the use of physical restraint
- To ensure that parents, students, school staff and community know about the school's plans and policies for managing behaviour and using physical restraint.
- Parents/Whanau must be informed when physical restraint has been used
- Good practice guidelines will be followed after an incident involving physical restraint
- The use of physical restraint will be monitored and reported to the BOT. This will include gathering and analysing information, identifying trends and checking that documentation about each incident is complete. This will be in a public- excluded session.
- All incidents of physical restraint will be reported to MOE, using required template
- There will be compliance with all relevant legislation and regard for the guidelines which outline best practice

PROCEDURE

The physical restraint provisions are intended to deal with the upper end of the spectrum of situations where teachers and authorised staff members have physical contact with a student. It is clear that, in these situations, the restraint is in response to a serious and imminent risk to safety.

Teachers and authorised staff members will receive UBRS training. This will also be included in the induction of new staff.

Authorised staff will be: Guidance Counsellors, Teacher Aides and the Student Support Co-ordinator. This will be part of their contract and they will receive thorough training on the legislation, policy and best practice.

The Principal must be informed as soon as possible when physical restraint has been used.

The Principal or Deputy Principal will inform parents.

The Principal will file the mandatory report to MOE

First aim should be to avoid needing using physical restraint by using preventative and de-escalation techniques to reduce the risk of injury.

Minimum force necessary to respond to the serious and imminent risk to safety must be applied.

Physical restraint must be used only as long as is needed to ensure the safety of everyone involved.

Identifying when physical restraint may need to be applied:

Teachers and authorised staff members will need to use professional judgement to decide what constitutes a “serious and imminent risk to safety.” Examples include:

- A student is moving in with a weapon or something that could be used as a weapon and is clearly intent on using violence towards another person
- A student is physically attacking another person or is about to
- A student is throwing furniture, computers or breaking glass close to others who could be injured if hit
- A student is putting themselves in danger, for example running onto a road or trying to harm themselves

These examples do not pose a serious and imminent risk to safety and the use of physical restraint should be avoided to manage behaviour in these situations:

- Behaviour that is disrupting the classroom but not putting anyone in danger of being hurt
- Refusal to comply with an adult's request
- Response to verbal threats
- To stop a student who is trying to leave the classroom or school without permission
- As coercion, discipline or punishment
- To stop a student who is damaging or removing property, unless there is a risk to safety

Acceptable physical contact

Staff may need to physically support students. The following situations are examples:

- Temporary physical contact such as an open hand on the arm, back or shoulders to remove a student from a situation to a safer place
- Supporting a student to move them to another location, or help them get in a vehicle or use the stairs
- Practice of harness restraint, when keeping a student and others safe in a moving vehicle or when recommended by a physiotherapist or occupational therapist for body positioning
- Assisting a student with toileting

Preventative Techniques:

- Understand the student – identify potentially difficult times or situations that may be stressful for them. Identify student’s personal signs of stress or unhappiness and intervene early, monitor classroom/grounds carefully for potential areas of conflict
- Respect the student – demonstrate a supportive approach, be flexible in responses and adapt to the demands of the situation, be reasonable, promote and accept compromise or negotiated solutions, while maintaining authority; take the student seriously and address issues quickly
- Preserve student’s dignity – address private or sensitive issues in private, avoid the use of inappropriate humour such as sarcasm or mocking

De-escalation techniques:

- Safety first – create space and time – remove the audience, give the student physical space, name the emotion in a calm, even voice (I can see you are very frustrated), wait
- Communicate calmly – talk quietly, try to remain calm and respectful, monitor body language and allow the student the opportunity to move out of situation with dignity, focus on communicating respect and desire to help, keep verbal interactions respectful and when appropriate give student clear choices and/or directions to help them feel more secure and regain control
- Think ahead in case situation escalates – move further away, have an exit plan, constantly reassess the situation and send for help if necessary
- What may escalate the behaviour – threatening the student, arguing or interrupting, contradicting what the student says – even if they are wrong, challenging the student, trying to shame the student or showing disrespect for the student

Call for help if you do not have skills or confidence to manage a situation

Police are to be called when a student cannot be managed safely and the imminent danger to students, staff or themselves remains, after all alternatives have been explored

Do not use the following restraints:

Physical restraints that inhibit breathing, speaking or main method of communication –eg sign language, prone (face-down), pressure point and pain holds, tackling, sitting or kneeling on a student, pressure on chest or neck, bending back of joints, headlocks, using force to take or drag a student who is resisting to another location

<p>Insert “ Good Practice Guidelines following an incident involving physical restraint” (p. 10)</p>

Staff must complete and sign an incident report using the attached template. This must be given to the principal who must also sign it. The completed form will go on the student's file and be available to parents and the student's teachers.